

Information Services Board Briefing Paper on the Request to Disband the Justice Information Committee

Prepared by Lourdes Collins, DIS/MOSTD, (360) 902-3569.

Description

The Justice Information Committee (JIC) will request that the ISB disband the JIC in favor of a new governance model.

Background

The Criminal Justice Information Act of 1984 was designed to ensure that the intensive information needs of the Sentencing Reform Act of 1981¹ would be met, in part by designating an Executive Committee for the implementation of the Criminal Justice Information Act (CJIA Executive Committee).

By January 1992, CJIA Executive Committee initiatives had developed to the point that they could not move forward without the consensus of the authorities in the criminal justice systems. Executive and judicial branch officials requested that the ISB create a Justice Information Committee (JIC) to provide policy, standards, and executive-level direction to the CJIA Executive Committee. The JIC provides the governance structure for justice information integration efforts, and reviews and approves the recommendations of the operational-level CJIA Executive Committee.

The Justice Information Committee was originally composed of:

- The Director of the Office of Financial Management
- The Administrator for the Courts
- The Director of the Department of Information Services
- The Secretary of the Department of Corrections
- The Chief of the Washington State Patrol
- A Superior Court Judge, representing the Washington Association of Superior Court Judges
- A District Court Judge, representing the Washington Association of District Court Judges
- An elected prosecutor, representing the Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys
- A county sheriff or city chief of police, representing the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs
- A county clerk, representing the Washington Association of County Clerks.

The original membership has been expanded throughout the years to include:

- The Director of the Department of Licensing
- A representative of the Office of the Attorney General
- A representative of the Washington State Association of Counties
- A representative of the Association of Washington Cities.

¹ The Sentencing Reform Act (SRA) of 1981 altered the sentencing structure in the state by establishing a determinate term of imprisonment for persons committing crimes after July 1, 1984. Criminal sentences are based, in large part, upon prior conviction history. Adoption of the SRA created a need to collect and analyze felony conviction information and forecast prison demands more accurately.

In March 2002, several JIC and CJIA Executive Committee members attended the SEARCH Symposium on Integrated Justice Information Systems in Washington D.C. At the symposium it was demonstrated by other states that successful justice information integration efforts used a multi-jurisdictional, multi-disciplinary, and multi-agency approach governed by a body comprised of all stakeholders, with committed leadership and the appropriate authority, responsibility, power, and funding.

In Washington State, no one agency has the express and specific authority, responsibility, power, and funding to lead and manage the state's integrated justice information efforts. Washington's current governance is missing important elements of a formal governance structure that contribute to success. Washington has reached a stage where the governance of integration efforts must be formalized and restructured in order to achieve success. Continuing reliance upon federal grant funds and scarce justice agency resources limits further progress and makes strategic planning problematic.

Status

The CJIA Executive Committee and the JIC drafted legislation to be submitted during the 2003 Legislative session. The legislation creates a board with authority to appoint a staff of sufficient size and sufficient resources to accomplish its duties to coordinate and manage integrated justice information efforts. The board's membership combines representatives from the JIC and the CJIA Executive Committee, as well as some adds/changes of members.

Current JIC and CJIA Executive Committee representation

- Department of Corrections
- Washington State Patrol
- Administrative Office of the Courts
- Office of Financial Management
- Office of the Attorney General
- Department of Information Services
- Department of Licensing
- Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration, Department of Social and Health Services
- Washington Association of County Clerks
- District and Municipal Court Judges Association
- Superior Court Judges Association
- Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys
- Washington State Association of Counties
- Association of Washington Cities
- Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs
- Association of County / City Information Services
- Sentencing Guideline Commission
- Seattle and King County Regional Safety & Justice Committee

Proposed Changes

⇒ Adds a representative appointed by the governor.

- ⇒ Specifies two representatives from the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs: an elected sheriff and a police chief.
- ⇒ Two representatives to be appointed by the Judicial Information System Committee in lieu of a representative from the District and Municipal Court Judges Association and a representative from the Superior Court Judges Association.
- ⇒ The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate may each appoint two members to the board, one from each of the two largest caucuses in each house.
- ⇒ The board may appoint additional justice information stakeholders as non-voting members of the board. These stakeholders include, but are not limited to, representatives of the Washington Military Department, the Sentencing Guidelines Commission, the state public defender agency, the state's crime victim advocacy office, King County, the City of Seattle, and federal criminal justice agencies.

At the June 25, 2002 JIC meeting, the new governance proposal was adopted in principle and members were asked to ratify by e-mail after final review. The proposal was adopted unanimously.

The CJIA Executive Committee and the JIC now wish to move forward with the new governance model in anticipation of enactment of the proposed legislation. The change disbands and eliminates the current JIC and restructures and strengthens the membership of the CJIA Executive Committee to include the majority of current JIC members.² The proposed legislation adds members of the Legislature to the governance board. The interim changes in governance proposed at this time do not include these additional members.

Benefits

- The proposed governance model restructures the operational-level and executive-level committees and eliminates duplication of effort.
- Standing and ad hoc subcommittees will be established with specific purpose and scope.
- If the legislation passes, dedicated funding and staff will provide the much-needed resources for integration efforts.
- If the legislation does not pass, the CJIA Executive Committee will continue as reconstituted.
- The proposed board does not supersede the authority of the ISB under Chapter RCW 43.105.

Issues

- Creation of a new board under Title 43 RCW might be difficult in light of the current budget deficits.

Recommendation

DIS recommends that the ISB disband the JIC and support the alternate governance model.

² These changes do not require legislative authority. The Washington State Patrol, Department of Corrections, and the Office of Financial Management have the authority to appoint CJIA Executive Committee members (Chapter 10.98 RCW Criminal Justice Information Act).